

others to begin such riots, so that, if due remedy be not the rather provided upon the same rebels, greater mischief, which God prohibit, may thereof spring through the Realm.'¹

Due remedy was not provided, and God did not prohibit greater mischief. The statute, to which this was the preamble, ordered special commissions of Justices of the Peace to hear the case of those lords who felt themselves aggrieved, and to imprison the said villeins, * rebels,' as indeed they had already become, till they should pay fine and submit to their lords. Of the action or inaction of these special commissioners we know nothing. The next thing we hear of the quarrel, is the rebellion of 1381 itself.

It will be seen that when that event took place the process of commuting villein services for money rents was going on fast, but not quite so fast as the serfs themselves wished, now that they were possessed by the idea of man's right to freedom.³ But the release from forced service was not the only question at issue between lords and villeins, nor did the latter consider themselves wholly free when such services had been commuted. The lord possessed other rights over the person of the villein and his family, rights varying in different counties and different manors, varying even from farm to farm on the same manor, rights that were often petty, but so multitudinous as to be exasperating, and so humiliating that they were incompatible with the new ideal. One villein must pay a fine to the lord when he gave his daughter in marriage, another must have his corn ground at the lord's mill only, and pay a high price to the monopolist miller. It was little grievances like these, which in old France mounted up to such a sum of wrong that the great Revolution was the result. It was not service on the lord's demesne, but the enormous multiplication of small seignorial dues and taxes that caused the 'culbute generale' in 1789. In England they had always been a less prominent feature, and in the course of the fifteenth century they disappeared, or survived only in the 'innocuous curiosities of copyhold.' But in the fourteenth century they were an additional goad in the side of the vexed peasant.

¹ *Stats. of Realm*, I B. H., cap. 6.

² see **Ap.**